

aimed at finding the causes of cancer, for example, in the tri-county area of Nebraska and many of you may not know that the incidence of cancer in the tri-county area of this State of Nebraska is several times the national average. For some reason people in the Hastings, Kearney, and Grand Island area are experiencing cancer rates and death rates from those cancers several times the national average and I think it is important for us to direct some resource, some of our resources to finding out why that occurs, and that is part of the aim of LB 506 and the amendment that Senator Carsten has adopted. Senator Warner's amendment would to a large extent undo that proposal. Now I want to talk about earmarking and I want to talk about it very specifically. I am shocked that we would object to the earmarking of cigarette tax money for cancer research specifically when we earmark cigarette tax money for all kind of other things, from building boat ramps at Lake McConaughy to building office buildings in downtown Omaha or downtown Lincoln. We also earmark a number of other things in state government including the fuel tax to support our roads and construction, alcohol taxes to support alcohol treatment. So I guess I don't see the dispute over earmarking, except that if there is a lack of support for this program in some circles...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR CULLAN: ...and the belief that this much money shouldn't be allocated to those circles. Even more specifically, I am surprised that Senator Warner objects to earmarking of cigarette tax money for cigarette tax research because the philosophical objections behind earmarking didn't deter Senator Warner from introducing 410 to ensure that some money is earmarked for maintenance of buildings in the University of Nebraska. So we are not object to earmarking in this Legislature. We just object to earmarking if it is not for the programs that we like. I don't think there is a more logical example of earmarking in any state anywhere than earmarking cigarette taxes for cancer research. The program has proven itself and it can continue to function well if we allow it to function and I hope that we will reject Senator Warner's latest attempt to kill the cancer research program in the State of Nebraska by eliminating the earmarking. Earmarking is also important for one other reason, because it is easy to trim money from research. Through the special session last year we cut the Department of Health's budget in this area just as we cut other operations of state government and that is fine.